Final Thoughts

When I signed up for this class, I did so as a way to honor my pediatrician, who had passed away from pediatric cancer over winter break. While I had hoped to be a part of a community that would understand what I had been feeling and to explore the topic of cancer more closely as a way to honor him, I had no way of knowing just how large the impact that this class would have on me.

First off, the amount of material I learned was extensive, from patient advocacy to medical ethics, and was so different from my other academic classes. Further, I was able to take a lot of what I learned from this class and use it to actually supplement the vast number of biology and chemistry classes I have taken. For example, I remember in my inorganic chemistry class we were going over different Pt reactions, and the Professor mentioned in passing how the compound on the board was actually cisplatin, a common chemotherapy drug. To know people who have probably used this drug or a similar drug made that lesson so much more meaningful to me. It made me truly internalize the impact of the information I am learning on people’s lives.

However, besides the learning aspect of the course, I met so many amazing community members and people who I know will shape the doctor I will hopefully someday become. In very few settings do you actually get to talk to patients and learn what they think makes a good doctor (and a bad doctor) while at the same time meeting and listening to incredibly accomplished physician role-models. From this part of the course, I have become more aware that you could be the smartest doctor in the world, but to have humanity and kindness matters
just as much to the people you are treating. In addition, I am hoping to stay in touch with many
of the community members, and to continue learning about their stories and lives.

Overall, this class truly changed me as a person. No matter how crazy my day had been or what
had been going on, the class helped remind me why I am doing what I am doing and made me
reflect about what really matters. I think my pediatrician would have been proud.